Law Enforcement Division Bi-Weekly Field Report 2/8/09 – 2/21/09

DISTRICT 1

CO Trey Luce responded to a complaint of a deer that had wandered out onto thin ice on Lake Superior near Marquette and had become stranded for a couple of days. Local deputies were able to utilize their hovercraft and safely bring the deer back to shore.

COs Marv Gerlach and Jason Niemi, while working in the Powers area for predator hunting activity, encountered a subject in the act of shooting a rabbit out his pickup truck window using a .243 rifle. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mark Leadman contacted three subjects sitting in a vehicle at Harlow Lake near Marquette who were using marijuana. One of the subjects was lodged on an outstanding warrant for domestic violence.

CO Jason Niemi assisted Menominee County with the extrication of an injured snowmobiler on a remote section of the snowmobile trail near Cedar River. The passenger's foot had become trapped in the track of the sled causing serious injuries.

CO Denny Gast continues to enforce careless snowmobile operation in Twin Lakes. Three operators were ticketed for running through stop signs.

CO Douglas Hermanson received a tip that a subject was bragging about a large buck shot in the Skanee area. CO Hermanson found the rack at a local taxidermist shop without a deer license affixed. CO Hermanson seized the rack after it was determined the subject had failed to purchase a license. Officer Hermanson then located the subject on an internet site and found that in a few pictures, two deer were in view. After a lengthy interview the subject confessed to taking a trophy seven point and a six point buck a week before season while shining with another subject at night. Warrants are being sought through the prosecutor.

CO Brett Gustafson and Sgt. Steven Burton, while working a snowmobile enforcement patrol throughout the Keweenaw Peninsula, came across five machines drag racing on a public trail near the town of Calumet. The snowmobiles were operating at speeds over 100 mph in a congested area. Enforcement action was taken

CO Brett Gustafson gave a law presentation to 129 teams of predator hunters this past week for the annual Ontonagon County Predator Hunt. Twenty-four coyotes, two bobcat, and two fox were taken with no observed violations.

COs Jason Wicklund and Dave Painter worked a local fishing tournament in Iron County. Good compliance was found with only a few minor fishing violations encountered. While working the fishing activity, the COs observed two pick up trucks

racing on the ice in a careless manner. One truck became airborne after hitting an ice mound. Contact with the operators found one driver to be intoxicated and was lodged for operating while intoxicated.

CO Brian Bacon worked the snowmobile trail system in the Norway area. An oncoming snowmobile nearly hit CO Bacon before leaving the trail on a sharp corner. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 2

CO Kyle Publiski issued a ticket to a snowmobile operator for a registration violation. The operator was warned for three other violations, including failing to wear a helmet while operating on the frozen surface of a lake. CO Publiski ordered the sled parked on the spot until a helmet was obtained. The operator requested a "break", due to being a health care professional.

DISTRICT 3

The winter sturgeon season on Black Lake ended on the fourth day of the season this year, when the 5th fish was speared. COs Matt Theunick and Bill Webster were present, collecting tags and advising the remaining sturgeon fishermen the season was over.

CO Eric Bottorff and Sgt. Greg Drogowski worked a complaint of set, unattended fishing lines, consisting of tree branches and hook & lines on Tower Pond, which is also designated trout water and the season is closed. The lines were located and surveillance paid off, as two individuals showed up, checking and re-setting the lines. Both have had multiple conservation violations in the past. Enforcement action was taken and the set lines seized.

CO Nick Torsky, while on patrol in the PRC State Forest, stopped at Cornwall Flooding to check for fishing activity. CO Torsky checked six anglers who had nice panfish and two largemouth bass. The anglers stated the bass had swallowed the hook and that's why they kept them. CO Torsky ticketed the angler for possessing bass during the closed season.

COs Kelly Ross and Joe Molnar continue to work on illegal feed sites in Montmorency and Alpena Counties. Several tickets have been issued for violations of the feeding ban.

CO Bill Webster worked night fishing activity at various lakes in Alpena County. One angler was discovered using a total of seven lines. On another lake, CO Webster located three anglers using a total of 12 lines. Tickets were issued to all four offenders.

While working a fish enforcement patrol on Fletchers Pond, CO Bill Webster observed several unattended tip-ups. He had the unattended lines under surveillance for nearly an hour when four anglers finally showed up. The fishermen admitted they went in for

lunch leaving out their lines in hope of catching a fish. Enforcement action was taken. CO Webster also ticketed a subject for taking an overlimit of panfish.

CO Joe Molnar investigated snowmobilers who were using the piled up snow in the parking lot of Glen's Market in Lewiston for play. CO Molnar found that none of the sleds had trail permits and one was without registration. Citations were issued.

DISTRICT 4

CO Mike Wells came across the head of an eight point buck while conducting a taxidermist inspection in Oceana County. Although there was a tag on the deer, it had not been validated. CO Wells contacted the tag owner, who stated he did not hunt. His brother had called on Thanksgiving morning stating that he had shot a deer and had no license for it. The non-hunting brother bought a tag and the two men took possession of the buck. An interview with the shooter confirmed his brother's story. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mike Wells responded to a complaint where a subject was suspected of shooting deer at night. When CO Wells arrived, he found an old deer head on the ground with a tag on it. A check of the tag revealed that the subject had purchased multiple deer licenses beyond what he could legally possess. The subject was ticketed for purchasing too many licenses.

CO Jeff Ginn responded to a Newaygo County trespass complaint. The owner of a parcel of private property witnessed two subjects sneak over to his trout pond and start throwing fish pellets into the water. The two subjects then attempted to snag the swarming fish. The subjects were ticketed for trespass.

CO Mike Wells was conducting a taxidermist inspection and found a number of untagged specimens and incomplete records at the business. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jair Kollasch handled three personal injury snowmobile accidents in Wexford County in three hours. One subject hit a rock coming off Lake Cadillac, sustaining internal injuries. The second subject was crossing railroad tracks and caught the ski of her snowmobile on the rail of the tracks, sustaining a broken clavicle and spine injuries. The third subject was negotiating a curve and hit a tree, sustaining a broken clavicle.

District conservation officers are still receiving and following up on feeding complaints with several tickets being issued.

CO Steve Converse, Manistee County, observed an angler tending two tip ups, and two poles for approximately an hour. CO Converse decided to approach the subject, and watched him quickly reel in two poles. When CO Converse questioned him about the number of lines, the subject claimed he didn't intend to keep the poles out, and was in the process of switching to tip ups. He stated that he hadn't had a chance to reel in his

additional lines. CO Converse checked the subject through LEIN and found that he also had an outstanding warrant for his arrest for failing to pay on a prior arrest. The subject couldn't post bond, and was lodged and issued a ticket for fishing with more than two lines.

CO Jair Kollasch was checking snowmobilers in the northern part of Wexford County when he contacted two operators who were not displaying registration. When asked for identification and proof of registration one subject produced an appearance ticket issued by CO Sam Koscinski earlier in the day for failing to register a snowmobile. Since the subject had already been ticketed, CO Kollasch returned his paperwork to the subject. When the second subject was asked to produce proof of registration he handed CO Kollasch an application for registration from Indiana and an appearance ticket issued by CO Koscinski. The two subjects tried to fool the CO by handing off the same paperwork twice when they thought Officer Kollasch wasn't looking. After a verbal education about lying and providing false documentation, the second subject was ticketed for the unregistered snowmobile.

DISTRICT 5

While on patrol, CO John Huspen located several unattended tip-ups without names on them. He followed snowmobile tracks from the tip-ups back to a residence but no one was home. Officer Huspen turned the information over to CO Chris Bowen, who located the tip-ups the next morning, frozen into the ice. He went to the residence and talked to a subject who said he had put them out and then went for a snowmobile ride and forgot about them. The subject had also put out too many lines.

CO Brian Olsen worked a complaint of a subject who was reportedly fishing with too many lines on a regular basis. CO Olsen located the subject and found him fishing with five lines and his fishing partner did not have a fishing license. Tickets were issued.

CO Brian Olsen responded to a complaint of coyote hunters who were trespassing. He located the group of hunters but they were not trespassing at the time. However, one of the hunters was implicated in the theft of a hunting blind. CO Olsen obtained a confession from him regarding stealing the blind and returned the blind to the rightful owner.

CO Brian Olsen investigated a complaint of a subject who was shooting at squirrels within his neighbor's safety zone. The subject told CO Olsen the reason he was shooting at the squirrels was because they were raiding his bird feeders. He was using a .22 rifle in a subdivision where several neighbors were within the safety zone.

CO Steve Lockwood arrested a subject who tried to elude him on his snowmobile. The subject led CO Lockwood on a short chase before stopping. When asked why he had fled, he told Officer Lockwood that he had been drinking and didn't want to be arrested for drunk driving. It was determined that the subject was not over the legal limit for alcohol but, in addition to the charge of flee and elude, he also had an expired

registration and was in possession of marijuana. The subject was lodged in the county jail.

CO Rebecca Hopkins located a subject who had driven his truck cross country on state land and was cutting live cedar trees without a permit. The subject stated he was building a deer blind for next deer season. A ticket was issued.

At 2:00 a.m., COs Brian Engelhard and Warren MacNeill responded to a complaint of a missing angler on Hubbard Lake. The subject had been missing since 9:00 p.m. the previous night. After nearly an hour of searching, the COs located the angler in his truck on the lake. The subject had gotten his truck stuck and kept the heater running until he ran out of gas.

DISTRICT 6

While checking anglers on the Saginaw Bay during a heavy and well predicted snow storm, CO Dan Lee saw a subject standing on the ice near shore. The man said he and two buddies had shuttled each other out to their fishing location using one snowmobile. He stated his friend on the snowmobile dropped him off but hasn't been able to locate the third member of the group in the white out conditions. They did have cell phone contact but no compass or GPS. Shortly afterward, an ORV came in with an extra passenger, which turned out to be the missing third party. The CO discussed the importance of watching the weather, bringing appropriate navigation equipment, and addressed the fact that the snowmobile was unregistered and nobody had a helmet.

CO Dan Lee attended a Whitetails Unlimited Banquet held in Frankenmuth. The CO discussed the past deer season, the future deer seasons, and the CWD issue. The CO also fielded questions regarding the ban on baiting and feeding.

While patrolling state land for illegal ORV use, CO Jay Person watched a group of vehicles gathering at a road end. There were four vehicles total that appeared to be getting ready to tear up a wetland area near the road end. The vehicles began to move down the trail toward the CO, who made a traffic stop. The lead truck had a tow strap hooked to the hitch and the other end was attached to a car hood with a recliner chair bolted on. A very surprised youth was sitting in the chair ready to be towed behind the lead vehicle through state land. The CO pointed out the error in their thought process and also educated the drivers on state land use rules.

CO Ken Lowell contacted a subject in a fishing shanty on Crystal Lake. Upon identifying himself as a conservation officer, it took the occupant longer than normal to open his shanty door. The CO then observed there were three lines down and another that was partially in the water. The angler stated he had a kid fishing with him a short while ago and forgot to pull the line out of the water. The CO contacted the young man who was fishing in another shanty and the young man explained that he had not fished in the subject's shanty all day. Enforcement action was taken.

While checking ice anglers, CO Ken Lowell observed two unattended lines in the water. The CO asked around and found two young boys who produced the name of the angler who left the lines. He was called, contact was made, and a ticket was issued for leaving his lines unattended.

CO Ken Lowell received a RAP complaint stating that one angler witnessed another putting out too many tip-ups on Crystal Lake. The CO contacted the complainant and gathered information that would help him locate the tip-ups. The CO located six tip-ups around midnight, with nobody around. CO Lowell pulled all but one tip-up and left the flag up on the remaining one. The CO returned in the pre dawn hours to watch the lake and was surprised to find that the angler had been there and gone. An hour later the CO located a vehicle matching the description given by the complainant. The subject was located in a field tracking the ORV that he believed had stolen his tip-ups. When asked what he was doing, the subject stated he was following tracks to find the person who stole his tip-ups. The CO informed the angry man that he had his tip-ups. All the man could say was, "you got me." Enforcement action was taken.

While working a fishing tournament in Montcalm County, COs Ken Lowell and Phil Hudson contacted a group of anglers on the ice. One shanty in the group was said to be empty. Further investigation led to unattended lines in the shanty. The group stated that their buddies went to the cabin to warm up and they must have left their lines down. The buddies were contacted and enforcement action was taken.

CO Chad Foerster received a RAP complaint of a deer carcass inside a trash can that was at the road for garbage pickup. The complainant found it suspicious due to the fact that the deer looked fresh to him. The CO investigated the complaint and found the deer appeared to be several months old, but did receive a confession of a tagging violation from an individual who lived at the residence. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Chad Foerster and Dan Lee investigated a RAP complaint of deer heads that were dumped alongside the road. CO Lee located the heads and found kill tags that were still attached. CO Lee gave the information to CO Foerster who located the subject and received a confession. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Vicki Goss found trash that was dumped on state land and followed up with address information found at the site. The subject had moved but the landlord had left a note on his door to call him. The CO called the landlord who provided a street name. CO Goss then contacted the subject at his residence. The subject said he paid a friend to get rid of the trash but he would take the ticket and settle up with his friend later. After further interviewing the subject, he admitted that he was the one who dumped the trash to save some money. A ticket was issued.

CO Robert Hobkirk is investigating a complaint of a homeowner who pumped his overflowed septic system from his yard and garage into Lake Huron. CO Hobkirk is working with the Department of Environmental Quality and the Health Department on the investigation.

CO Seth Rhodea investigated a complaint of a subject shooting a deer that was supposed to be injured. Upon contacting the subject and interviewing witnesses, it was determined that the deer was injured but not bad enough to justify killing the animal. Seems that the deer was shot while running away from the shooter. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Jason Smith and Seth Rhodea received guilty pleas from five subjects they ticketed for killing five illegal deer. The restitution and fines totaled over \$5,000.

DISTRICT 7

COs Mike Mshar, Chuck Towns and Patrick McManus responded to a complaint of four domestic buffalo that had escaped a facility, traveled into a residential area and were in the Allegan State Game Area (SGA). After evaluating risks to public safety and property, the owner requested that the COs euthanize the animals before any property damage occurred, as there were no means available to confine or capture the animals. The COs assisted the owner with his request, eliminating a threat to public safety and potential vehicle traffic hazards.

CO Gary Raak obtained arrest warrants for a subject wanted on \$32,000 in back child support, who also used false identification to obtain a fishing license to avoid detection and arrest on support payments. Also issued were warrants for unattended lines and no name and address on tip-ups.

CO Gary Raak and Sgt. John Jurcich responded to a call of a snowmobile and passengers through the ice on Gun Lake in Barry County. Upon arrival they were met by the operator and passenger who crawled out safely, but their snowmobile, shanty and gear all sank quickly through melting ice. Winter Fest was held the previous day on Gun Lake but areas of open water were present.

CO Chris Holmes reported a subject who was ticketed for second offense trespassing for fishing a small lake, was fined \$250 for trespass and \$190 for an overlimit of bluegills.

CO Andy Bauer conducted a minnow dealer inspection on a local bait shop in Berrien County. The inspection revealed the bait shop had not attained the required minnow dealer license since 2007. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jeff Robinette contacted two subjects cutting and collecting timber from the Crane Pond State Game Area. Investigation revealed the subjects did not have a wood cutting permit and were in violation of timber trespass.

CO Steve Orange responded to a Report-All-Poaching complaint where a private citizen was flying his small plane over the CWD core area in Kent County and observed a large deer feeding location. CO Orange was able to locate the feeding site using information provided by the pilot and ticketed the responsible party for the bait/feed violation.

DISTRICT 8

COs Dan Bigger, Shane Webster, Damon Owens, Jason J. Smith, Al Mendez, and Jeff Walker served a search warrant on a residence and recovered nine firearms that are believed to have been used in the illegal killing of several deer earlier in February. The firearms and bullets recovered from the deer will be sent to the crime lab for a ballistics match. The investigation continues.

CO Dan Bigger was the first on the scene of a rollover vehicle accident. The vehicle had gone off the road and was turned upside down with the operator trapped inside. CO Bigger was able to free the operator who was not seriously injured.

While investigating a complaint of a safety zone violation, CO Pete Purdy located the subject who was rabbit hunting and did not have a small game a license. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 9

Sgt. Tom Wanless received a feeding complaint where the complainants were very concerned about their neighbors violating the feeding ban. The complainant did not leave any contact information in the complaint. CO Mark Papineau and Sgt Wanless were able to track down the location. The information was given to CO Ben Shively who contacted the complainants. While talking to the complainants, CO Shively observed the subject dumping corn in their back yard. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Linda Scheidler and Sgt. Tom Wanless conducted a taxidermy inspection and seized three sets of antlers due to tagging issues. Follow up was conducted with the hunters. In one case, the female hunter shot a deer in the afternoon with her bow, waited until her husband came home from work, then tracked and located the deer and then she purchased her license. In another case, an apprentice hunter failed to validate the kill tag. When CO Scheidler interviewed the subject, he and his father admitted the apprentice juvenile hunter was hunting without supervision. In the last case the subject dialed to validate his license.

CO Linda Scheidler was the first on scene of a rollover personal injury accident on I-69 in Davison Township. The CO provided basic first aid to a 10 month old baby before turning the baby over to family who arrived 20 minutes later. The adult male was pinned in the vehicle. CO Scheidler also rendered first aid to him until the fire department could get him out of the vehicle. The victim had a broken arm and was sent to the hospital via ambulance.

While fueling up at a gas station, CO Ron Pinson was contacted by a subject who thanked the CO for treating him fairly while arresting him for drunk driving. At first, CO Pinson could not remember the subject until the subject told the story. It happened in 1982 when CO Pinson worked for Michigan State Police. The subject informed the CO

that because of being arrested and treated fairly, he quit drinking and got his life back on track.

While checking small game hunters at the Pointe Mouillee SGA, CO Dan Walzak encountered two subjects who were lighting off a variety of illegal fireworks. The two subjects, one of whom was a minor, had just come from a fireworks shop and were lighting off firecrackers, salutes and rockets. In addition to the use of the fireworks, CO Walzak found the adult was driving a car with an improper plate attached. The adult readily admitted that his actions lacked good judgment, since his ambition was to become a conservation officer. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Brandon Kieft was given a RAP Complaint of a snowmobile that had fallen through the ice on Cass Lake near the fishing pier at Dodge 4 Park. The rider was able to make it to shore and contacted a friend who brought his SUV out to retrieve the snowmobile. The SUV fell through, leaving the rear wheels sticking in the air about five feet above the ice surface. The snowmobile was removed from the water early Sunday afternoon. The owner of the SUV did not take CO Kieft's advice and call a marine salvage service and instead called for a tow truck. The tow truck driver would not go onto the ice but allowed the owner to hook the tow cable to the vehicle. The owner ignored the driver and hooked the cable to the trailer hitch instead of the axle. The hitch did not hold and the rear wheels sank. The owner then attached chains through the front windows hooking the pillars. Another attempt resulted in the heavy duty tow truck being dragged toward the lake and the SUV rolling onto its left side. A second heavy duty tow truck was called to hold the first tow truck. Three to four hours later, the SUV was removed.

Sgt. Arthur Green and CO's Lacelle Rabon, Ben Shively, Brandon Kieft, Mark Papineau, and Ken Kovach conducted an ORV patrol on White Lake in Oakland County during the ice races. Officers issued fourteen tickets for various ORV, snowmobile, and fishing violations. Attendance was reported as good considering the cold temperatures and high winds.